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1673.

1873.

HISTORICAL SKETCHES

OF

DUNSTABLE, MASS.

BI-CENTENNIAL

ORATION

OF

HON. ·GEORGE B. LORING,

September 17, 1873.



LOWELL, MASS.  
GEORGE M. ELLIOTT, PUBLISHER,  
No. 48 Central Street.  
1873.

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## ORATION.

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MY FRIENDS AND FELLOW-CITIZENS: —

I have accepted your invitation to deliver this address on the occasion of the second centennial anniversary of the settlement of your town, with great reluctance and many misgivings. I cannot expect to share with you all those hallowed memories which spring up in your minds and warm your hearts, whose homes are on this spot, whose ancestors repose beneath this sod, whose hearthstones are here, whose eyes have beheld the domestic scenes and whose hearts have felt the joys and sorrows which make up the story you would most gladly hear to-day. To you who enjoy this spot as home, the church, this village green, these farm-houses, every field and wooded hill, the highway and the by-path, the valley and the brook, all tell a tale of tender interest, to you who remember the events of childhood here, to you who to-day return from long wanderings, to you who have remained and have brought this municipality on to an honorable era in its history, to you who turn aside to linger over the grave of a beloved parent, and to you who still pause and drop a tear on that little mound where your child has lain so long and from which, through all the years that have passed since it left you, its sweet voice has been heard, reminding you of your duty in this world and assuring you of the peace and joy of the world to come. To me, indeed, the domestic record of this town, the most sacred record to you, is, as it were, a sealed volume, open only to my gaze as a member of the same human family with yourselves, and as one feeling that common sympathy which binds, as with a silver cord, all the sons of God into one great brotherhood. While, therefore, I cannot intrude upon the sacredness of your firesides, nor claim a seat in your domestic circle, nor expect to be admitted within the railing of your altar, I can call to your minds those events in the history of your town which have established its intimate relations with that interesting experiment of society and State which has been worked out on this continent during the last two hundred years.

WHAT A NEW ENGLAND TOWN IS.

In celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of a New England town, the peculiar and extraordinary nature of a civil organization of this kind

should not be forgotten, especially by those who enjoy the high privileges which belong to it. To many nationalities and peoples, a town means nothing more than a cluster of houses surrounded by a wall and fortified, or the realm of a constable, or the seat of a church; but to us in New England the town was in the beginning, as it is now, the primary organization, sovereign in itself. "The colonists had no sooner formed a settlement, and erected their cabins in convenient proximity to each other, than they organized themselves into a town an independent municipality, in which every citizen had a voice and a vote." The first duty of these organizations, in the minds of our fathers, was the establishment of a church; and the erection of a meeting-house and a school-house received their earliest care and attention. It is remarkable and interesting to see how, in the little municipalities of New England, all the rights of citizenship were cherished, and how silently and unostentatiously all the elements of a free state were fixed and developed. Starting away from the original colonies, they planted themselves in the wilderness, and assumed at once the duty of independent organizations. Their citizens, in town meeting assembled, had the control of all matters relating to their civil and criminal jurisdiction. "In the New England colonies the towns were combined in counties long after their establishment and representation as towns; so that the county here was a collection of towns, rather than the town a subdivision of a county." This system of town organization is maintained throughout New England to the present day, constituting one of the most interesting features of the civil polity of this section of our country. Says Barry, in his "History of Massachusetts," "Each (town) sustained a relation to the whole, analogous to that which the States of our Union hold respectively to the central power, or the Constitution of the United States." Says Palfrey, in his "History of New England," "With something of the same propriety with which the nation may be said to be a confederacy of republics called States, each New England State may be described as a confederacy of minor republics called towns." Neither in New York, with its great landed properties, at first held and occupied by a kind of feudal tenure, and afterwards with its counties; nor in the Western States, where the town survey carries with it no local political authority; nor in the South, where the county organization is the one which governs local matters, can be found that form of self-government which gives to the New England towns their individuality, and which has enabled them to enroll their names on the brightest pages of American history. How, in the olden time, they cherished the church and built the meeting-house; how they fostered education and erected the school-house; how they selected their wisest and bravest men for the public councils; how they resolved for freedom in open town-meeting; how they hurled defiance at the oppressor, and sprang up, an army of defiant communities, each one feeling its responsibility, and ready and anxious to assume it! Would you study the valor of your country in its earlier days? Go to the

town records of New England. Would you learn where the leaders and statesmen were taught their lesson of independence and nationality? Read the recorded resolves of the New England towns. The origin and organization of these New England towns were by no means uniform. In some instances they were founded immediately on the landing of the colonists, out of lands conferred upon them by their charter. In other instances, they were made up by grants of land to an offshoot from the parent colony, whose enterprise consisted in organizing a new town. In other instances, grants of land were made from time to time to individuals and corporations for farms and other purposes, which grants were afterwards consolidated into townships. In this last manner grew up that large town organization known as DUNSTABLE. It occupied one of the most beautiful sections of New England. "To the great Indian tribes the Merrimack and Nashua Rivers were as well known as they are to us. From the great lake of New Hampshire to the sea ran for them the strong and flashing river, whose waters abounded with fish of the best variety, and whose banks were diversified with warm and sunny slopes, fertile valleys, and tree-crowned hills.

"To the white explorers these lands presented great attractions; and so in 1659 and 1660, and on to 1673, grants of land were made in these regions from time to time to the explorers Davis and Johnson, to Mrs. Anna Lane, to John Wilson, to the town of Charlestown for a 'School Farm,' to John Whiting, to Phinehas Pratt and others, to Gov. Endecott, to Henry Kimball, to Samuel Scarlett, to Joseph and Thomas Wheeler, to the 'Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Boston,' and to others of less chivalry and less note. It was the proprietors of these farms and others disposed to settle here, who, in September, 1673, presented a petition to the General Assembly that they might be 'in a way for the support of the public ordinances of God,' for without which the greatest part of the year they will be deprived of, the farms lying so far remote from any towns." The petition was granted upon the conditions which were then universally inserted in the charters, viz., "that the grantees should settle the plantation, procure a minister within three years, and reserve a farm for the use of the colony."

#### HOW DUNSTABLE WAS FORMED.

The township of Dunstable, thus chartered, embraced a very large tract, probably more than two hundred square miles, including the towns of Nashua, Nashville, Hudson, Hollis, Dunstable, and Tyngsborough, besides portions of the towns of Amherst, Milford, Merrimac, Litchfield, Londonderry, Pelham, Brookline, Pepperell, and Townsend, and formed a part of the county of Middlesex. It extended ten or twelve miles west of Merrimack River, and from three to five miles east of it, and its average length north and south was from twelve to fourteen miles. The present city of Nashua occupies very nearly the centre

of the original township. In 1674, because there was "very little medo left except what is already granted to the ffarmers," the easterly line of the township was extended to Beaver Brook by an additional grant from the General Court, and the town was called Dunstable. It received its name in compliment to Mrs. Mary Tyng, wife of Hon. Edward Tyng, one of the magistrates of the commonwealth of Massachusetts, who came from Dunstable, England. This extensive tract of land, thus incorporated and thus named, has been subjected to many divisions. In 1731 the inhabitants on the east side of the river petitioned to be set off, which petition was granted, and a new town was created by the Assembly of Massachusetts, called Nottingham. In 1733 a part of the town lying west of Merrimack River was incorporated into a township by the name of Rumford, but soon after was called Merrimac. In 1734 Litchfield was set off and incorporated, because the inhabitants there had, as they said, "supported a minister for some time." In 1736 Hollis was set off from Dunstable; and in 1734 Amherst was settled and incorporated. In 1732 Townsend was incorporated, taking in the southerly part of the town, including Pepperell. Thus township after township had become parcelled out from the original body of "old Dunstable," until in 1740 the broad and goodly plantation was reduced to that portion only which is now embraced within the limits of Nashua and Nashville, Tyngsborough and Dunstable. At length the boundary line between New Hampshire and Massachusetts was established in 1741, severing Dunstable very nearly in the middle, and leaving the town of Nashua within the limits of New Hampshire. To the township of Dunstable in Massachusetts, where we are now assembled, have since been added portions of the town of Groton, the first portion having been set off Feb. 25, 1793, and the second Feb. 15, 1820, for the convenience of the inhabitants, and that the boundary lines might be straightened.

#### EARLY SETTLERS.

Among the original proprietors of this land we find the names of many of the leading men in the colony, some of whom, with the children and friends of others, removed here and took up their abode at an early period. Of this number we find Governor Dudley, who married a daughter of Hon. Edward Tyng, of this town; Rev. Thomas Weld, who was the first minister, and married another daughter; Thomas Brattle, Peter Bulkely, Hezekiah Usher, Elisha Hutchinson, Francis Cook, and others who were assistants and magistrates. Many of the first settlers belonged to Boston and its vicinity, a circumstance which gave strength and influence to the infant plantation.

#### EARLY MANNERS AND CUSTOMS.

Of the motives and manners and customs of those who founded this town let me here say a word. They formed a part of that large body of

Dissenters, who, under various names, came to New England and settled the colonies of Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay. They came, it is true, to enjoy religious freedom, but they also sought a civil organization, founded upon the right of every man to a voice in the government under which he lives. In the charters of all the towns granted by the General Court, it was provided that the grantees were "to procure and maintain an able and orthodox minister amongst them," and to build a meeting-house within three years. "This was their motive. In all their customs they were obliged to exercise the utmost simplicity, and they voluntarily regulated their conduct by those formal rules which, in their day, constituted the Puritan's guide through the world. We are told, as an illustration of their character and manners, that by the laws of the colony in 1651, "dancing at weddings" was forbidden. In 1660 William Walker was imprisoned a month "for courting a maid without the leave of her parents." In 1675, because "there is manifest pride appearing in our streets," the wearing of "long hair or periwigs," and also "superstitious ribands" used to tie up and decorate the hair, were forbidden under severe penalties; men, too, were forbidden to "keep Christmas," because it was a "Popish custom." In 1677 an act was passed to prevent "the profaneness" of "turning the back upon the public worship before it is finished and the blessing pronounced." Towns were directed to erect "a cage" near the meeting-house, and in this all offenders against the sanctity of the Sabbath were confined.

At the same time children were directed to be placed in a particular part of the meeting-house, apart by themselves, and tithing-men were ordered to be chosen, whose duty it should be to take care of them. So strict were they in their observance of the Sabbath, that John Atherton, a soldier of Col. Tyng's company, was fined by him forty shillings for "wetting a piece of an old hat to put into his shoes," which chafed his feet upon the march; and those who neglected to attend meeting for three months were publicly whipped. Even in Harvard College students were whipped for grave offences in the chapel in the presence of students and professors, and prayers were had before and after the infliction of the punishment. As the settlers of Dunstable are described in the petition as "of soberly and orderly conversation," we may suppose that these laws and customs were rigidly enforced.

#### MODES OF LIVING.

Perhaps a word upon the subsistence and diet of your ancestors may interest you here. Palfrey tells us that "in the early days of New England wheaten bread was not so uncommon as it afterwards became," but its place was largely supplied by preparations of Indian corn. A mixture of two parts of the meal of this grain with one part of rye has continued, until far into the present century, to furnish the bread of the great body of the people. In the beginning there was but a sparing consumption of butcher's meat. The multiplication of flocks for their wool, and of herds

for draught and for milk, was an important care, and they generally bore a high money value. Game and fish to a considerable extent supplied the want of animal food. Next to these, swine and poultry, fowls, ducks, geese, and turkeys, were in common use earlier than other kinds of flesh meat. The New-Englander of the present time, who, in whatever rank of life, would be at a loss without his tea or coffee twice at least in every day, pities the hardships of his ancestors, who almost universally, for a century and a half, made their morning and evening repast on boiled Indian meal and milk, or a porridge, or a broth made of pease or beans and flavored by being boiled with salted beef or pork. Beer, however, which was brewed in families, was accounted a necessary of life, and the orchards soon yielded a bountiful supply of cider. Wine and rum found a ready market as soon as they were brought from abroad ; and tobacco and legislation had a long conflict, in which the latter at last gave way.

#### POPULATION.

It is difficult to realize how feeble and few were the colonists at the time when this town was passing out of its confederation of farms into an organized corporation. There were then probably "in New England from forty thousand to forty-five thousand English people. Of this number twenty-five thousand may have belonged to Massachusetts, ten thousand to Connecticut, as newly constituted, five thousand to Plymouth, and three thousand to Rhode Island. They inhabited ninety towns, of which four were in Rhode Island, twelve in Plymouth, twenty-two in Connecticut, and the rest in Massachusetts. . . . Connecticut, according to the account sent home by the royal commissioners, had many scattering towns not worthy of their names, and a scholar to their minister in every town or village. In Rhode Island, they said, were the best English grass and most sheep, the ground very fruitful, ewes bringing ordinarily two lambs, corn yielding eighty for one, and in some places they had had corn twenty-six years together without manuring. In this province only they had not any places set apart for the worship of God ; there being so many subdivided sects they could not agree to meet together in one place, but, according to their several judgments, they sometimes associated in one house, sometimes in another. In Plymouth it was the practice to persuade men, sometimes to compel them, to be freemen,—so far were they from hindering any. They had about twelve small towns, one saw-mill for boards, one bloomery for iron, neither good river nor good harbor, nor any place of strength ; they were so poor they were unable to maintain scholars to their ministry, but were necessitated to make use of a gifted brother in some places. The commodities of Massachusetts were fish, which was sent into France, Spain, and the Straits, pipe-staves, masts, fir boards, some pitch and tar, pork, beef, horses, and corn, which they sent to Virginia, Barbadoes, etc., and took tobacco and sugar for payment, which they often sent for England. There was good store of iron made in the

province. In the Piscataqua towns were excellent masts gotten, . . . and upon the river were above twenty saw-mills, and there were great stores of pipe-staves made and great store of good timber spoiled. In Maine there were but few towns, and those much scattered; they were rather farms than towns. In the Duke of York's province beyond the Kennebec there were three small plantations, the biggest of which had not above thirty houses in it, and those very mean ones too, and spread over eight miles at least. Those people were, for the most part, fishermen, and never had any government among them; most of them were such as had fled hither to avoid justice. In Boston, the principal town of the country, the houses were generally wooden, the streets crooked, with little decency and no uniformity; and there neither months, days, seasons of the year, churches, nor rivers were known by their English names. At Cambridge they had a wooden college, and in the yard a brick pile of two bays for the Indians, where the commissioners saw but one. They said they had three more at school. It might be feared this college might afford as many schismatics to the church and the corporation, as many rebels to the king, as formerly they had done if not timely prevented."

#### ACTION OF THE TOWN AFTER THE DIVISION OF MASSACHUSETTS AND NEW HAMPSHIRE.

The division of the original township and the adjustment of the boundary line between Massachusetts and New Hampshire by no means removed all the difficulties which had attended the course of the town thus far. On the 12th of March, 1743, a town meeting was held at the house of Ebenezer Kendall, not only "to raise money to defray y<sup>e</sup> charges of said town, and to support y<sup>e</sup> Gospell," but also "to choose a committee to treat with a committee in the District of Dunstable, if they choose one, to examine the debts and credit of y<sup>e</sup> town and to know how they stood before the line was run between y<sup>e</sup> Province of Massachusetts Bay and New Hampshire." Deacon John Taylor, Ebenezer Parkhurst, and Capt. John Cummings were the committee. A large part of the business of the town for several years, at the time I refer to, consisted in running lines, and endeavoring to adjust the debts and claims, interspersed with debates upon building meeting-houses and laying out burying-grounds. Now and then a young and ambitious community, which had started off and set up on its own account, expressed a desire to return to the old roof-tree; and it was found necessary to vote, in 1743, *not* to annex Nottingham, which had been set off but twelve years previous. The places for public worship seem to have been steadily provided, either in some private house or barn, or in a building erected for that purpose. Preaching the people would have at any rate. Of education, I cannot say quite as much. The burden was, perhaps, at times, a little too heavy for that primitive people, and so in 1769 they voted not to raise any money for the support

of a school, at one meeting, but at another they voted to spend £20 for a school, and in the same breath, mindful of their dangers and necessities, they voted £6 and 10s. for ammunition. In 1771 they raised £24 for a school, and £60 for the highways. In 1774 it was voted not to raise money for schools. But in the midst of all the trials and the impoverishment of the Revolutionary war, they voted, March 5, 1778, "to raise and be assessed £50 for the support of a school," recognizing the value of a cultivated mind in a community assuming the duties and enjoying the rights of a free people. I am also reminded by their record that they intended to hold their public servants to a strict accountability, for in 1751 an article was inserted in the warrant for a town meeting, "To choose a committee to search John Stealls account as town treasurer"; but John Steall, in spite of his name, turned up an honest man, and the article was dismissed from the warrant.

#### THE HEROISM OF THE TOWN.

But not in matters relating to the religious and civil and educational interests of the town alone were your ancestors engaged, from the earliest settlement in 1655 to the period to which I have now arrived. The lands were too fertile, and the rivers too fair, and the forests too well stocked with game, to be abandoned without a struggle on the part of those aboriginal occupants who had enjoyed their possession for many generations. The popular rights there asserted, as the town grew into a definite civil organization, were not to be established without a blow; and later still, the integrity of that government which had been founded at such a vast expense of blood and treasure, and by the exercise of so much study, sagacity, and wisdom, was not to be preserved except by the devotion and valor of loyal men in arms. In every crisis occurring within a century and three quarters of its existence—now in struggle with a savage foe, now in strife against the tyrant and the oppressor, and now in deadly conflict with the traitor—Dunstable has always done her duty well. As early as July 5, 1689, your ancestors were called to arms against that savage band, which, having attacked Dover and having killed Major Waldron and his men, turned their bloody attention towards this town. In the summer of 1691 this attack was renewed, and in the month of September of that year, one hundred and eighty-two years ago, the entire family of Joseph Hassell was slain,—the first sacrifice offered up here in the cause of civilization,—whose simple monument has long since been obliterated by the hand of industry, and whose sad and touching story alone remains. The town now became a garrison. The General Court granted aid for the support of its church, and made a liberal abatement of its State tax. Upon Jonathan Tyng, that name so long honored and beloved here and so conspicuous for generations in the annals of our country, fell the duty of preserving the very existence of the place, as commander of the fortifications erected to protect it. That this war, which lasted until 1698, was full of



thrilling and painful incident in this town, we have every reason to suppose, although we find no written record, and the tradition was long ago forgotten ; but we do know that here Joe English performed his wonderful exploits, and that Mrs. Dustin, who was captured at Haverhill, and who slew her captors, ten in number, at the mouth of the Contoocook River, found her first refuge as she wandered down the valley of the Merrimack on her way homeward, in the house of old John Lovewell, "father of worthy Capt. Lovewell," which stood on the side of Salmon Brook, a few feet northeast of the Allds Bridge. When, in 1703, the Indian hostilities were renewed, and the General Assembly offered £40 for every Indian scalp, it was Capt. Jonathan Tyng, of Dunstable, who first accepted the tender, and made a good winter's work by going to their headquarters at Pequawkett, securing five scalps, and receiving therefor £200. It was in this war that the family of Robert Parris was massacred, two little girls alone escaping by fleeing to the cellar and hiding in a hogshead (who cannot hear their little hearts beating in agony amidst the terrors which surrounded their dark and narrow retreat ?), one of whom was preserved to become ancestress of the useful and distinguished family of Goffes, so well known here and in New Hampshire. It was in this war that a band of Mohawks surprised your garrisons and murdered your people, and in which, I am proud to say, the men of Essex County came to your rescue and defence. It was in this war, which lasted until 1713, a period of twenty years, that the population of this town was reduced one half, but thirteen families and eighty-six persons remaining ; that the entire population was obliged to live in garrison ; and that fear and desolation reigned everywhere, as the savages hung upon the skirts of the English villages "like lightning on the edge of a cloud."

#### LOVEWELL'S FIGHT.

In 1724 a contest broke out with the Indians, in which Dunstable seems to have been principally interested from beginning to end, and in which the warriors of Dunstable bore a most conspicuous part. The strife began with an attack by the English on the town of Norridgewock, Me., during which a band of Mohawks turned upon this town, and commenced a story of cruelty, adventure, and valor hardly equalled in history. The capture of Nathan Cross and Thomas Blanchard began the fray, which resulted in the death of Lieut. Ebenezer French, Thomas Lund, Oliver Farwell, and Ebenezer Cummings, of Dunstable, whose burial-place is still marked by a monument not far from the State line. It was in consequence of this attack that John Lovewell, Josiah Farwell, and Jonathan Robbins, of this town, petitioned the General Assembly for leave to raise a company, and to scout against the Indians. Their petition was granted, changing the bounty for scalps from £50 to £100, and John Lovewell organized his expedition. His first successful march into the Pequawkett region was in December, 1724, from which he returned to organize another and

larger expedition, on which he set out in February, 1725, and which resulted in the entire destruction of a band of Indians, on the 20th of that month, near what is now known as Lovewell's Pond. "Encouraged by his former success, and animated still with an uncommon zeal of doing what service he could," Lovewell marched a third time into the wilderness, intending to attack the Pequawketts in their headquarters on the Saco River. Early in May, 1725, he set forth with thirty-four men, of whom seven were from Dunstable, five from Woburn, seven from Concord, one from Andover, one from Weston, one from Londonderry, one from Billerica, seven from Groton, and two from Haverhill. These brave men, who, having reached the scene of action, and holding counsel on the subject of attacking a large body of Indians who lay in wait for them, declared "that as they had come out on purpose to meet the enemy, they would rather trust Providence with their lives and die for their country than return without seeing them," were ambushed and nearly all slain, Capt. Lovewell falling at the first fire, and his chaplain, Jonathan Frye, of Andover, lingering three days after the close of the fight, and dying of his wounds in the wilderness. Many a time have I, when a boy, paused to rest beneath the shade of a graceful, sturdy, and imposing elm-tree, which crowns one of the finest hills of my native town of North Andover, and I have mused there upon the sad and tragic story of that young man, Jonathan Frye, who, when he left his home to join Capt. Lovewell's expedition, planted that tree, that he might, as he said, leave his monument behind should he fall in the service. The memorial is, indeed, beautiful and significant, as in each returning spring, all through this century and a half of years, it has crowned itself in honor of his memory who planted it there; but the young man has a higher and more enduring monument still, in that it is recorded of him that "worthy and promising," a son of Harvard, he laid down his life to prepare the way for the dawn over that wilderness of the religion of his Lord and Master, to whom he had dedicated all his powers. The memory of Capt. Lovewell is as green as the opening springtime forest where he fell; and while man sets high value on courage and honor and devotion will the poet sing his praise, and the historian portray his deeds, and your town will be proud of her son. This chivalrous and touching and disastrous struggle closed the long series of Indian depredations, in which Dunstable had been threatened so often and had suffered so much.

During the French war, which broke out in 1755, the towns composing the original territory of Dunstable did valiant service, true to their traditions, and faithful to the memory of their illustrious dead. In the adventures of that war, in which John Stark commenced his career in connection with the men of Dunstable, the names of Lovewell, Blanchard, Johnson, Farwell, French, and Goffe, names possessed and cherished by you still, are foremost. And now the great events of the American Revolution began, both in the council and on the field. I find that on Oct. 3,

1774, while this town "chose Capt. John Tyng to represent the town in the great and general court or assembly, to be held and kept at the court house in Salem, upon Wednesday, the fifth day of October," the inhabitants also voted that "John Tyng and James Tyng serve for this town in the Provincial Congress, to be held in Concord on Tuesday, the eleventh day of October," two for one in favor of the uprising patriots. With this, I think, we ought to be content.

On the eleventh day of January, 1775, John Tyng and James Tyng were chosen to represent the town in a Provincial Congress, to be held in Cambridge on the first day of February, and it was voted "that the following committee of inspection of nine persons be appointed to carry into execution, in the town of Dunstable, the agreement and association of the late respectable Continental Congress. John Tyng and James Tyng, Esqrs., and Messrs. Joseph Danforth, Nathaniel Holden, William Gordon, Reuben Butterfield, Jacob Fletcher, Leonard [Butterfield], and Joel Parkhurst were chosen as this committee." On the 12th of June, 1775, John Tyng was, on account of feeble health, obliged to resign his seat in the Provincial Congress at Watertown, and Joel Parkhurst was elected to fill his place. There are frequent indications on your town-books of the advancing spirit of your ancestors in the cause of independence. Feb. 14, 1776, for instance, the town-meeting was called "in His Majesty's name"; May 15 it was called "in the name of the Government and people of ye Massachusetts Bay"; Sept. 20, "In the name of the Government and People of the Massachusetts State"; and Oct. 3, 1776, the town voted to recommend the adoption of a State Constitution.

#### A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

Meanwhile the spirit of independence grew warmer and warmer, and the idea of American nationality filled the minds of the people of the town. The Declaration of Independence had not yet set forth the wrongs of the colonies, it is true, nor had it proclaimed to the world the intention and ultimate object of the American people in the great contest then raging; but to the people of Dunstable, these wrongs were familiar, and their breasts were animated by those patriotic sentiments which had been uttered in such eloquent tones in Faneuil Hall, and had found such a warm response on the floor of the Continental Congress, and so this town spoke and made its record for the time. If you will turn to your town-books you will find the following entry:—

"At a meeting of ye Town of Dunstable on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 1776 [nearly a month before the Declaration of Independence], chose Mr. Joel Parkhurst, Moderator:—Then chose Major Ebenezer Bancroft, Capt. Reuben Butterfield, and Mr. Timothy Read, a committee to prepare ye Draught of a vote which is as follows:—At a time when ye most important Questions that ever were agitated Before ye Representative Body of this Colony, Touching its Liberties and privileges, will demand your

attention, as we your constituents are called upon to instruct you in every Important Point of Duty you may be called to act upon, viz: of y<sup>e</sup> Colonies being Declared Independent of Grate Brittan when we reflect upon the States of America, when our Forefathers first came over here, and y<sup>e</sup> cause for which they came, and The Treatment of Grate Brittan Towards us Ever since, But especially of Late when our Humble Petition to y<sup>e</sup> King of Grate Brittan for our just Rights Repeatdly Rejected with Disdain and fier and sword, Takeing place upon our Brethren of this Land. He and His Parliament not only Deceaving the People of Grate Brittan but attempting To hier y<sup>e</sup> natives of this Land to Butcher us, and for what we know hath Hired all y<sup>e</sup> covitous, Bloodthirsty souls upon y<sup>e</sup> face of y<sup>e</sup> whole earth to come against us in order to rob us of Life and fortune, y<sup>e</sup> contemplation of which fills our breasts [with] Abhorrence and Disdain against y<sup>e</sup> Power that is thus acting we then will joyn with our brethren of America, in Pressing such measures as the Hon'ble the Continental Congress shall adopt if it is that of Independence of Grate Brittan and you will Equip yourself as a member of Society and will use your utmost Indeavors in promoting the cause of America not in the least doubting your abilities. The above being Red to y<sup>e</sup> Town y<sup>e</sup> Question being put whether y<sup>e</sup> same Be given as advice to y<sup>e</sup> present Representative of this Town passed in the affirmative. *Nem. Con.*

“Entered by

“JOSIAH BLODGETT JR.,

“*Town Clerk.*”

I think I see them now, those earnest and manly sons of the Puritan warriors and teachers, who had filled the pulpits and town-houses and armies of our land during a century of protest and trial and self-sacrifice and defiance, rising higher and higher in their indignant sense of duty as the fierce periods which I have just read to you were launched forth upon an approving town-meeting here by that simple and sturdy chairman. And can you not feel with them the hot blood of the warrior Lovewell coursing through their veins as the ardent declaration went on? The memory of long and weary trials in the cause of civilization there in that wilderness, of the precepts of those old teachers who were gone, of the bloody seas through which they had been brought to their great assertion, of the wrongs of the past,—this and their glowing understanding of the promise of the present hour before them, and of the future, all inspired their minds with wisdom and their hearts with courage for that occasion.

From their humble homes they had stepped forth, not to follow but to lead, not to listen but to speak, not to be taught but to teach mankind to be true to the highest demands of a free and independent spirit. It was to the voice of such assemblies as this that our fathers of the Revolution listened; it was the wisdom of such assemblies that guided their councils, and gave the American people their greatness.

## WHAT TROOPS THEY RAISED.

True to this spirit and inspired by this language, Dunstable continued to supply men to the army, voting, in 1777, "to raise men for the Continental army," and also voting "not to allow those men that hired men into the Continental army for 1776, equal to others." It was also voted, March 5, 1781, "to allow the committee to procure beef for the army." Passing beyond this practical service, the town voted "to recommend the adoption of a state constitution," Oct. 3, 1776. In all these acts and declarations we cannot but be struck with the important position assumed by the towns in those early days, and the important part they performed; nor can we fail to look with profound interest on the intimate relations existing between the people and their representatives, and the power and persistency with which the popular voice was continually raised for the guidance and instruction of the rulers. In the war of 1812 the town voted "that each soldier in the town of Dunstable that shall be called into the actual service of the United States shall be allowed, out of the town treasury, a sum sufficient to make his pay fifteen dollars per month for such time as he shall be so actually engaged, including the pay allowed by government."

## THE CIVIL WAR.

And when the country, to the foundation and independence and honor of which Dunstable had devoted herself through the generations of two centuries, was threatened with disruption, the spirit which had responded so warmly for independence roused itself at once for its safety and protection. To the repose of peace your people had long been accustomed, so long that the front of war was almost unknown, even when presented in your midst; but rising with the occasion, this little community decimated itself for the loyal armies, furnishing forty-three men to the country's service and appropriating more than \$10,000 out of the treasury of the town for the support and comfort of the soldiers. The votes recorded in your town-books, commencing in July, 1862, with the offer of a bounty of one hundred dollars to each volunteer, and ending April, 1864, with a vote increasing the bounty to one hundred and twenty-five dollars, manifest a patriotic calmness and devotion in the most trying hour of the war.

## CIVIL MATTERS IN THE TOWN.

Towards the close of the Revolutionary war, the question of a constitution for the State of Massachusetts was submitted to the voters of the several towns in the commonwealth. In Dunstable a town-meeting was called on May 15, 1780, and adjourned to Tuesday, May 30, to consider the several articles of the constitution reported by the convention which had prepared it. The objections are so remarkable and significant that I shall lay them before you, as an illustration of the positive views and sentiments of those times. Joel Parkhurst having been chosen moderator

in the place of John Tyng, Esq., who was unavoidably absent, "the meeting proceeded to consider the second and third articles, wherein they engage full protection to all denominations of Christians ; which sentences are so general as to engage protection to the idolatrous worshippers of the Church of Rome. The questions being put, there appeared twenty-three for an amendment, none against it.

"The second objection was to the sixteenth article in said bill of right, as to the liberty of the press, as there being no restraint therein it may be made up to the dishonor of God, by printing heresy and so forth, and injurious to private character. The question being put, twenty-six appeared for an amendment, none for the article as it now stands.

"The third objection was to having so large a number of councillors and senators as forty, whereas twenty-eight, under the former constitution, they understood, answered every purpose required of that body ; upon the question there appeared twelve for an amendment."

"The fourth objection was relative to the governor's power of marching the militia to any part of the State, without the advice or consent of any. The amendment proposed was that when the governor should find it needful to march the militia from and about Boston more than one hundred miles, it should be by advice and consent of his council and not otherwise, and by the same advice and consent, to have full power to march them to the assistance of any neighboring State, in the recess of the General Court, when there appeared eleven for the amendment.

"The fifth objection was to the appointment of all judicial officers, the attorney-general, the solicitor-general, all sheriffs, coroners, and registers of probate resting in the hands of the governor and council, but held it a right of the people at large to choose them; upon this question, seven for an amendment and six against it.

"The sixth objection was to the declaration to be made and subscribed by the governor, lieutenant-governor, council, Senate and House of Representatives, before they proceed to execute the duties of their office, which is to declare themselves to be of the Christian religion, reasons offered for said objections were these, that thereby the government would be confined to Protestants ; upon the question there appeared nineteen for the amendment, and none in the negative.

"The seventh objection was to the form of oath prescribed ; the amendment proposed was this : to place the words 'by the Living God,' taken in said oath as is required in His word ; thirteen for amendment."

"The eighth objection was that the denomination of people called Quakers being admitted to office upon an affirmation without taking oath in manner and form as required of others ; upon the question, there appeared twelve for the amendment and none against it.

"The ninth objection was to the time proposed for the revisal of the constitution if it should take place, but proposed to have this amendment, that precepts be issued by the General Court for a change of delegates

for that purpose in seven years from this time ; the question was then put whether the town would approve of said constitution or form of government, if amended for substance as pointed out in this return, when there appeared thirteen in favor of it taking place, and not one to the contrary."

I think it is evident that your ancestors believed in an economical government, were opposed to military despotism and Cæsarism, did not approve of a powerful executive, had strong Puritan faith and no great love for Quakers or Catholics, and meant to make an oath as binding as possible.

#### RELIGIOUS TEACHING.

I have already stated that in the settlement of New England, religion was at the very foundation. and I have depicted to you some of the early struggles in this community to provide for the preaching of the gospel. The first meeting-house was erected in 1678, and was probably built of logs. In May, 1679, Rev. Thomas Weld was employed here as minister. He married Hannah, daughter of Hon. Edward Tyng. In 1684 a new meeting-house was erected, and he was ordained in December, 1685. The name of Jonathan Tyng heads the list of church members. Mr. Weld died in 1702, at the age of fifty, leaving a high reputation as a scholar and preacher. He was succeeded by Rev. Samuel Hunt in 1705, by Rev. Samuel Parris, of witchcraft fame, in 1708, by Rev. Amos Cheever in 1713, on a salary of £40 per year, by the Rev. Jona. Peirpoint in 1717, by Rev. Nathaniel Prentice in 1720. These clergymen were, many of them, graduates of Harvard, were firm in the Calvinistic faith, and exerted a good influence on the community. They exercised an exemplary economy in their modes of living, and they cultivated those qualities of mind and heart in their children which made the families of the clergy of that early day nurseries of many of the most useful, substantial, and reliable characteristics of the New England colonies. From the time to which I have alluded until our own day, the condition of church affairs here has been generally peaceable, and the temper of pastor and people has not been controversial. In fact, I find but one notable event, to which I can call your attention, and that is so interesting, so full of instruction and sound suggestion, such an illustration of that honesty and fidelity which become a public servant, that I desire to state it fully here. As recorded in your town-books, it is as follows:—

"The committee chosen by the Town of Dunstable, at their last meeting, Sept. 2, 1811, to represent to and consult with the Rev'd Joshua Heywood respecting the state of public worship in the town, have attended to that service and offer the following statement of the Rev'd Mr. Heywood as their report.

" ZEBEDEE KENDALL	} Committee.
MICAH ELDREDGE	
NATHANIEL CUMMINGS	
JOHN CHANEY	

"DUNSTABLE, Sept. 14, 1811."

"TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF DUNSTABLE :

"*Gentlemen*, — Whereas, your committee chosen by you in town meeting, the 2d of September, 1811, have represented to and consulted with me on the situation of the town respecting public worship, and having represented to me that there are in the minds of many, apprehensions of pecuniary embarrassment, in consequence of an Act passed at the last session of the General Court of this commonwealth, relating to religious freedom, I do, with their advice and concurrence, make the following statement to you :—

"As I did, in my answer to the call given me to settle as a gospel minister in this place, bring to your view the impropriety of making the stipulation between a people and their minister a matter of pecuniary speculation, and as you complied with it, I ever thought that we were bound on both sides never to do any such thing. I do, therefore, now most solemnly record my protest against it.

"But conceiving it to be the duty of a people and their minister to be always helpful to each other under all difficulties and embarrassments, to perform this duty, therefore, toward you, now laboring under apprehensions of embarrassments, I propose to you that provided the said Act of the General Court above mentioned, shall not be repealed, but be put in execution to your damage, so that your ministerial taxes shall be increased thereby upon the valuation of your estates, and provided there shall be a majority of the town, who will attend the public worship of God with the Congregational Church of Christ, as heretofore done in the house now built for that purpose, under the regular administration thereof, which, by Divine Providence, shall be provided, I will relinquish so much of my salary for the present year, as the increase upon their ministerial taxes shall be. The year to begin the 1st of March, 1811, and end the 1st of March, 1812. That no encouragement be taken herefrom to the damage of the town, I reserve the consideration of any relinquishment in future years, to my own judgment of the circumstances which may then exist.

"My design and intent in this proposal and engagement, is to relieve the town from their present apprehensions and embarrassment, and to have them attend on the public worship of God in as orderly and regular a manner as they can under the present difficulties, and to prevent the introduction of such irregularities as would be to the damage of the town and church. If this proposal gives satisfaction to your minds and meets your approbation, and you use your endeavors to carry the things proposed into effect, then this instrument, by me signed, shall be in full force, otherwise it shall be void and of no effect.

"JOSHUA HEYWOOD.

"DUNSTABLE, Sept. 11, 1811."

Although I find no recorded words of the clergy of Dunstable, no vigorous appeals in great public crises, no contributions of theirs to the controversial literature of their day, I can still read in the popular charac-



teristics of this town, in the unflinching courage and energy of your early ancestors, in the steady and long-continued rectitude of the public men here engaged in the councils of both town and State, in the constant recognition of the value of religion and education, — I can read in all this the salutary influence of a high-toned and pious succession of Christian ministers within your borders. But of none, either here or elsewhere, can higher praise be uttered than of Joshua Heywood, who, recognizing the burdens which pressed upon his people, declined to avail himself of any statute for his pecuniary advantage, refusing to make “the stipulation between a people and their minister a matter of pecuniary speculation,” and appealing to their sense of honor to stand by that contract which he made with them, and they with him, in the beginning, even though it might be to his own loss. If the theology and ethics of this town have furnished this and this alone as their contribution to the best guiding principle of the land, then has it not been built in vain. I commend the conscience and temper and spirit of Mr. Heywood to all the public servants of our land, high and low, to all who feel and know that a virtuous and honorable republic is the highest glory of man, and that a corrupt republic is his deepest shame.

#### DISTINGUISHED MEN.

I should not be doing justice to this town, and discharging my duty on this occasion in accordance with your best sentiments, did I fail to remind you of some, a few at least, of those men of mark whose names are intimately connected with your history. In all my recital of the important events in your earlier annals you must have noticed the prominence and importance attached to the name of Tyng. The founder of the family here was Hon. Edward Tyng, who died Dec. 28, 1681, aged eighty-one years. Col. Tyng was born in Dunstable, England, in 1600, settled in Boston as a merchant in 1639, was representative in 1661 and 1662, assistant from 1668 to 1681, and colonel of the Suffolk regiment. He left six children, two sons and four daughters. His sons were prominent in their day, and his daughters will be remembered as among the foremost women of their time; Hannah having married Rev. Thomas Weld, a leading clergyman of this town and of the colony; Eunice being the wife of President Willard, of Harvard College; and Rebecca having married Gov. Dudley. Col. Tyng had the strength, energy, and courage of a leading and successful colonist, had enterprise enough to leave the Old World for the opportunities of the New, sagacity enough to become a distinguished and prosperous merchant, and strength of character sufficient to found a family. He became possessed of lands in this town by early grants, and having acquired a fortune by commercial enterprise in his manhood, he had the wisdom to retire to the country to enjoy there the evening of his day. He gave the name to a town in his own honor, and in that town his ashes repose. Hon. Jonathan Tyng, the son of Col.

Edward Tyng, was born Dec. 15, 1642, and died Jan. 19, 1724, aged eighty-one. It is said of him, "He was one of the original proprietors of the town, and the earliest permanent settler, having remained here alone during Philip's War, when every other person had deserted the settlement for fear of the Indians." He was a man of great energy and decision of character, and of probity and honor. He was one of the council of Sir Edward Andros, a royal commissioner under James II, a representative of this town and one of its selectmen. It was he to whom the garrisons of the town were intrusted during the Indian wars. Two of his sons, John and Eleazer, were graduates of Harvard College, and his daughter Mary followed the example of many of the attractive and accomplished young women of that day, and married the parish minister, Rev. Nathaniel Holden. Col. Tyng married Sarah, daughter of Hezekiah Usher, who died in 1714. Rev. Thomas Weld, the first minister of the town, died June 9, 1702, aged fifty years. He was born in Roxbury, and was a grandson of Rev. Thomas Weld, the first minister of that town, who came from England in 1632. Mr. Weld, the subject of this notice, graduated at Harvard in 1671, and studied divinity with Rev. Samuel Danforth, and settled in Dunstable in 1678. He married for his first wife Elizabeth, daughter of Rev. John Wilson, of Medfield; and for his second wife Hannah Savage, daughter of Hon. Edward Tyng. He was a man of great piety, and exerted an elevating influence on the community during his long ministry. He was a good representative of that class of men who in those days were educated at Harvard, stood by the church, and encouraged the schools, and who did so much to give New England that character of intelligence and integrity which she has not yet lost, and which has been carried by her sons into every corner of our land.

AMOS KENDALL, an eminent lawyer and statesman, was born in Dunstable, Aug. 16, 1789, son of Zebedee [Kendall] and his wife. He was occupied during his early life, until sixteen years of age, in work on his father's farm. His advantages for education were small, and it was not until he entered Dartmouth College, in 1807, where he was graduated with the highest honors of his class, in 1811, that he was in any way enabled to gratify his love of knowledge. Having taught school in various parts of Massachusetts, in order to defray the expenses of his education, and having studied law with William B. Richardson, Esq., of Groton, afterwards chief justice of New Hampshire, he removed to Kentucky, was tutor in the family of Henry Clay, afterwards postmaster of Lexington, Ky., and finally editor of the *Argus of Western America*. While living in Kentucky, he did much to develop the common schools of that State, and established the school fund now in existence there. His ability as an editor and writer attracted the attention of President Jackson, who, in 1829, called him to Washington, where he was successively fourth auditor of the treasury department and postmaster general. He remained in public life until 1840, when he retired to the duties of his profession.

Mr. Kendall was one of the clearest and most forcible writers of his day. His mind was directed by the warmest instincts for the people, and by a keen understanding of those doctrines of government which are based on popular rights and tend to preserve the popular virtue. His words were well known throughout our country, and to him was accorded the distinction of clothing the administration of President Jackson with many of its finest utterances and many of its noblest appeals. The character of Mr. Kendall was pure and admirable. Towards the close of his life he formed one of the attractions of Washington, where his mild, blue eye, his long, snowy hair, his delicate and slender form, his placid expression, were familiar to all, and where his charming conversation was one of the great delights of the circle in which he moved. It was this delicacy of his moral and physical structure which prevented his being one of the most conspicuous, as he was one of the ablest and purest, personages in our history.

#### CONCLUSION.

And now, friends and fellow-citizens, this brief story of your town is told. I have not explored the remotest recesses of your annals for marks of your eccentricity, or for those personal details which, while they amuse for the hour, make no appeal to those sentiments of pride and satisfaction which should fill the breast of every man who muses by the graves and studies the high qualities of his ancestors. I have not forgotten your errors, — the local controversies, the existence of slavery here when slavery existed everywhere, the shortcomings and the temporary irritations; but I have passed them by, and have endeavored so to deal with your history as to fill your minds with respect for your ancestors and with a determination to transmit, in more radiant form, the blessed institutions which you have inherited, to those whose duty it shall be to preserve them, and to celebrate them at the next centennial anniversary of the settlement of this town.

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